

## DIRECT CERTIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Direct certification is a paper saving activity available to school districts for the purpose of identifying certain children who are eligible for free meals or milk. More children may be fed nutritious meals or receive free milk if direct certification is used. To maximize the benefits of direct certification, including paperwork reduction, the following activities should be completed before the beginning of the school year. Households receiving benefits from food stamps, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) may be directly certified to receive free meals or free milk.

### **BEFORE** IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION:

1. Contact the County Welfare Department or the County Office of Education to ascertain the method you will use to obtain the names of students from households currently certified to receive food stamps or CalWORKs.
2. Determine and negotiate the responsibility for any cost associated with producing these lists.
3. Request the County Welfare Department or the County Office of Education to provide a list of names of the children who are members of households currently certified to receive food stamps or CalWORKs. This list must include a welfare official's signature and date of certification. The signature may be a photocopy if using computerized lists.
4. Enter into an agreement with the County Welfare Department or the County Office of Education regarding the confidentiality of the information received.
5. Submit the completed and signed *Policy Statement Addendum Direct Certification Procedures* to the Nutrition Services Division.

### **TO IMPLEMENT** DIRECT CERTIFICATION:

1. Prior to the beginning of the school year, send the *Eligibility Notification Letter* to the households of directly certified children. If you find it difficult to notify these households because of overt identification, you may send the *Letter to Households - Direct Certification* to all households.
2. If you sent the *Eligibility Notification Letter* to the households of directly certified children, distribute the *Letter to Households - Direct Certification* to all other households. Do not provide this material to directly certified children if eligibility materials are distributed by mail or by individualized packets.
3. If eligibility materials are distributed any way other than direct mail or individualized packets, include in your *Policy Statement Addendum Direct Certification Procedures* a description of how overt identification is prevented. Maintain documentation of the procedures used to administer direct certification as part of your policy statement.
4. Information provided by the County Welfare Department is valid for 12 months. Update records when you are notified by parents of changes in eligibility information.
5. Maintain documentation of the households notified of direct certification of eligibility and of the children directly certified to receive free meals or milk.

### **AFTER** IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION:

1. Maintain a list of the names of the children from households currently receiving food stamps or CalWORKs that is retrievable by school site, as well as by track, for year round schools.
2. Maintain documentation on households eligible for free meals or milk that decline to participate. This documentation may be obtained in writing or by verbal contact with the household. If contact is verbal, proper documentation would include the name of the person declining benefits, the phone number of that person, the date the household declined benefits, and the name of the school official who received the verbal decline.

## SAMPLE POLICY STATEMENT ADDENDUM DIRECT CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Agreement Number	
School/Agency Name	
Street Address, City, Zip Code	

Per USDA requirements, we are submitting our Direct Certification procedures that have been incorporated into our policy statement. The following procedures describe how we propose to operate direct certification:

1. Applications for Free and Reduced Price Meals or Free Milk are: (check one)  
☐ Mailed directly to households.  
☐ Distributed to all students by individualized student packets.  
☐ Other. Our method of distribution that prevents overt identification is:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. We plan to use the prototype of the *Eligibility Notification Letter* provided by the Nutrition Services Division (NSD).  
☐ Yes      ☐ No (A copy of our version for advance approval is attached.)
  
3. We plan to use the prototype of the *Letter to Households-Direct Certification* provided by NSD.  
☐ Yes      ☐ No (A copy of our version for advance approval is attached.)
  
4. A. Our district provides student data to:  
☐ County Welfare Department,  
☐ County Office of Education, or  
☐ Not applicable  
B. Our district receives data from:  
☐ County Welfare Department,  
☐ County Office of Education, or  
☐ Not applicable
  
5. Directly certified children are identified by:  
☐ County Welfare Department,  
☐ County Office of Education, or  
☐ District
  
6. The information provided by the County Welfare Department/County Office of Education is current as of:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (date).
  
7. The specific identifying information we use to be certain that the child listed by the County Welfare Department is the same as the one enrolled in our school district is: (Check all that apply.)  
☐ Student Social Security Number      ☐ Street Address      ☐ Date of Birth      ☐ Other  
☐ Name: First and Last      ☐ City, Zip Code      ☐ Sex      Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. When a discrepancy exists between any of the above specific identifying information, our procedures are:  
☐ We request an application from Household      ☐ Other
  
9. Other procedures related to the direct certification process are:

Signature of School/Agency Official:	Date:
Printed Name and Title of School/Agency Official:	Telephone No.:
Contact Person (if other than School/Agency Official):	Telephone No.:
Signature of NSD Official:	Date:

Sacramento, CA 95814-2342

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Education's Nutrition Services Division (NSD) prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability.**